THE EPISTLE FROM THE YEARLY MEETING IN LONDON,

Held by Adjournments, from the 9th of the Sixth Month 1783, to the 14th of the ſame, incluſive.

To the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of Friends in GREAT-BRITAIN, IRELAND, and elſewhere.

DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS AND BRETHREN,

The Salutation.

UNDER a renewed ſenſe of that mercy and divine regard which have been communicated to us from the ſource of all goodneſs, and under a deep engagement in this our annual aſſembly for the welfare and proſperity of the Church, which ſeeketh the true exaltation of the flock and family of Jeſus Chriſt, we now ſalute you!

Account of Sufferings.

The amount of friends ſufferings brought in this year from the counties of England and Wales, being principally for tithes and thoſe called church-rates, is ſeventeen pounds ten ſhillings and ſixpence; and thoſe from Ireland to two pounds ten ſhillings and threepence halfpenny.

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By accounts received from the ſeveral meetings in England; and by epiſtles from Wales, North Britain, Ireland, Holland, New England, New York, Pennſylvania, and New Jerſey; we are ſorrowfully informed that a lamentable declenſion prevails amongſt friends; few having come in by convincement, and that in divers places many have been diſunited from the ſociety in conſequence of a proud rebellious ſpirit and the love of unrighteous mammon, which

which have taught them (rather than confide in that power which is alone able to ſave) to place their truſt in the fleſh, and have induced them to arm their ſhips during the late hoſtilities with implements of death and deſtruction—to contribute to the ſupport of war by a voluntary ſubſcription to government loans—and to manufacture weapons for the purpoſes of bloodſhed and carnage.

We tenderly entreat thoſe favoured few who have received the manifeſtations of divine love, that they may not ſit down ſatisfied with having been enabled to make ſome progreſs in their pilgrimage to the heavenly Jeruſalem, the city of Zion, the ſaints ſolemnity—nor conclude that what they have already experienced has made them whole, and that all is well with them; for in this there is a danger unſeen of falling into a ſtate of weakneſs and dwarfiſhneſs—Let none therefore ſit down at eaſe, but with exemplary zeal and fervency preſs daily forward, and acknowledge the Lord in all their ways, that he may direct their paths, leſt like the Iſraelitiſh backſliders, they fall in the Wilderneſs, and never obtain the promiſed inheritance in the land of Canaan.

" You ſee your calling, brethren; how that not many wiſe men " after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: " But God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the World to con- " found the wiſe; and God hath choſen the weak things of the " world to confound the mighty; and baſe things of the world, " and things which are deſpiſed hath God choſen; yea and things " that are not to bring to nought things that are." So that the true Church conſiſts of a ſmall company of poor, mean, ſimple, baſe, and deſpiſed men, in the eyes of the world and worldly church; yea of ſuch who in their judgment deſerve to have no place nor being in the world, and who now out of their own choice would willingly join themſelves to a pure and ſeeking congregation, " Zealous of good Works."

We entreat you, brethren, attend not to the Lo heres and the Lo theres which are heard in the land; let not the inſidious language of the tempter draw you aſide, but follow ſteadfaſtly on to the mark of the prize of the high calling.—Live, we beſeech you, in ſubjection to the principle of truth—Contemn the allurements of all worldly pleaſures, ſports, paſtimes, and diverſions—the luſts of the fleſh, the pride of life, and the inordinate purſuit of earthly gain; ſo ſhall ye be preſerved from the evils which abound amongſt the children of men, and juſtify the ways of holineſs to all the nations of the earth.

We lament that many descended from pious anceſtors who ſtood firm, and maintained their integrity in the day of perſecution and outrage, ſhould fail of coming up in the ſame paths, and of keeping

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ing a conſcience void of offence to him, who graciouſly ſupported their forefathers in exemplary faith and patience.

The principles they with ſo much zeal and conſtancy maintained, and ſo deeply ſuffered for, ought not to be held in light eſtimation with us in this day of eaſe, wherein we enjoy the freedom publicly to worſhip the great author of our being, and well being, according to our conſciencies, and to hold forth the ſeveral branches of our religious duty to him, without ſuffering the like ſeverities with our predeceſſors. They nobly kept their ground againſt their unwearied adverſary, the enemy of their ſoul's ſalvation; and ſhall any of their ſucceſſors who reap the advantage of their faithfulneſs, take their flight in times of calmneſs and ſerenity?—— Under the ſame obligations they were to teſtify to the truth both in profeſſion and practice; let us walk in the ſame paths of ſelf-denial, and follow Chriſt in the regeneration; nor deny him by diſobedience to his requirings, or be aſhamed of him before men, leſt he deny us before his Father which is in heaven!

We exhort you in the tender bowels of chriſtian concern, that you keep your ſeveral ſtations—Walk as becometh the goſpel—Watch over one another for good—And we particularly entreat thoſe appointed as Elders and Overſeers, to be diligent in the diſcharge of their important duties.—Let the weak brethren be admoniſhed—let the true ſeekers be comforted—and the ſincere travellers Zion-ward be cheriſhed—let the ſcattered be gathered—let the unwary be cautioned—let the unruly be warned—and ſuch as act in oppoſition to the ſpirit and doctrine of truth, be treated in love and meekneſs, yet with firmneſs and chriſtian boldneſs—That the holy cauſe may not ſuffer through the remiſsneſs of thoſe who are placed as watchmen in the camp of Iſrael.—*Hæc unica, eaque Sola via eſt, qua ad concordiam proxime perveniri poteſt.*

Nevertheleſs, let us not be haſty to condemn one another. "ſince "to condemn one another for every difference in judgment, pro- "duces innumerable ſchiſms in the church, than which nothing "can be more deſtructive to the peace of it; and therefore that "raſh judgment that produces theſe animoſities, is the great ene- "my to the harmony of the church, and the great advancer of the "devil's work of diviſion."

Finally, Brethren, as this is a time of exerciſe and deep labour, let us endeavour to obtain that true ſpiritual baptiſm which cleanſeth from all unrighteouſneſs—from pride, covetouſneſs, uncleanneſs, and all evil, that we may obtain the promiſe of Chriſt. Rev. iii. 12. "I will write upon him τὸ ὄνομα μου τὸ καινόν, my new name."—And when the laſt vials are poured on the ſeat and throne

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of the beaſt, we may join the triumphant ſhout of the ſpiritual church, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils."

Signed in and on behalf of the Yearly-Meeting, by

WILLIAM TOOKE,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

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